

Before the  
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
Washington, DC 20554

In the Matter of

Replacement of Part 90 by Part 88 to )  
Revise the Private Land Mobile Radio )  
Services and Modify the Policies )  
Governing them )

and

PR Docket No. 92-235

Examination of Exclusivity and )  
Frequency Assignment Policies of the )  
Private Land Mobile Radio Services )

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COMMENTS OF CSX TRANSPORTATION, INC.

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COMMENTS OF CSX TRANSPORTATION, INC.

CSX Transportation, Inc. ("CSXT"), hereby responds to the invitation for comments issued by the Commission in the Report and Order and Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making in the above-captioned proceeding, released June 23, 1995. In these comments, CSXT will focus on issues relating to consolidation of radio services and frequency coordination. CSXT also endorses the comments of the Association of American Railroads ("AAR"), which more fully iterate the implications of the Commission's proposals for railroads.

**I. BACKGROUND**

CSXT, a Virginia corporation and railroad company, operates approximately 18,759 route miles of tracks in twenty (20) states, the District of Columbia and Ontario, Canada. In 1994, CSXT transported over 4,480,000 carloads of goods and materials. CSXT was the safest among the nation's major freight railroads in 1994, with the lowest rate of train accidents, 1.68 per million train miles.

CSXT has deployed and operates a sophisticated, interrelated, systemwide radio communications network, with more than 30,000 base, mobile and portable radios. From its centralized dispatching center in Jacksonville, Florida, CSXT uses this network to control the operation of train movements throughout its entire

system. Without the use of this radio communications network, the Company could not have achieved and maintained the level of business and the safety record it has.

Radio communications drive railroad operations and serve vital safety functions. These communications are essential to every aspect of railroading. For example, they enable CSXT to switch cars, deliver freight to customers, negotiate rail traffic, maintain tracks and structures, deliver crews to operate trains and coordinate police activities. Additionally, railroads such as CSXT use radio communications to telemeter air brake pressure, relay critical information from trackside defect detectors such as overheated wheel bearings, dragging equipment and rock slides, and frequently, to communicate essential safety information to locomotive operators.

These critical communications occur over a 91-channel block that has been reserved for railroad use since 1945. This "Railroad Radio Service" has been run by and for the railroads and has ensured an unbroken web of reliable, nationwide communication. The FCC currently proposes to consolidate the Railroad Service into a group of other, unrelated services. Frequency coordinators unschooled in the intricacies of railroad operations would be authorized to assign frequencies to a host of industries including the railroads. Such consolidation poses a serious threat to the integrity of the operating and safety systems currently in place. CSXT echoes the comments of the AAR in this regard and provides its own supplemental statement below.

## **II. THE RAILROAD RADIO SERVICE SERVES THE VERY SINGULAR NEEDS OF THE RAILROAD INDUSTRY AND SHOULD BE RETAINED**

Railroads are inherently unique. Other radio communications users typically need broad, almost circular coverage in a given geographical area. Railroads, as they course through the country on narrow strips of right-of-way, require continuous, narrow ribbons of coverage which may extend through numerous states. These are complemented by broader coverage in the vicinity of yards and terminals. The connected "ribbons" of coverage needed by the industry will be very difficult to patch together through multiple coordinators from various parts

of the broadcast spectrum.

Another distinctive feature of railroad radio use is the critical need for interoperability. Our current equipment can tune in any channel on the Railroad Radio Service spectrum. The interchange of freight and passenger cars and the necessity for trains from one railroad company to operate on the tracks of another railroad company, require that all railroad radio communications systems be compatible. By restricting these operations to the frequencies within the Railroad Radio Service, we have maintained this essential compatibility. Should railroad service be consolidated into pools of users as proposed by the Commission, interoperability will be at risk. Radios that can tune in to any channel are not yet available. Until they are, the inability for equipment to pick up a given signal would severely impede operations and could have catastrophic consequences. New radios operating on a multitude of additional channels will necessarily be more cumbersome and confusing to operate, thereby jeopardizing the safe operation of trains. Furthermore, the conversion by the railroads to the newly required equipment is estimated to cost hundreds of millions of dollars.

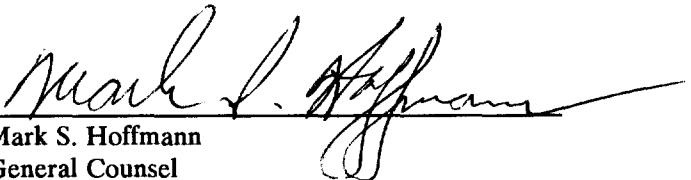
A frequency coordinator who does not have extensive knowledge of complex railroad operations will exacerbate the problems described above and further compromise smooth operations and safety. For example, should a frequency unavailable on CSXT's radio equipment be assigned for dispatcher to train operations on another railroad within our operating area, it may seem to those less familiar with our business to be of little consequence. However, in the case of an unexpected event, such as a river barge hitting a bridge and taking our track out of service for an extended length of time, CSXT trains could possibly be routed over the tracks of another railroad. If our communications system were not capable of the new frequency assigned to the other railroad, it would, at minimum, unnecessarily complicate and delay the operation. These compatibility issues could arise every minute of every day, and not merely in the unexpected scenario described above. As mentioned earlier, railroads interchange with one another and operate on each other's tracks all the time. Locomotives may cross the entire nation in this manner. A dedicated spectrum that enables all railroads to use the same equipment is the only safe and effective answer to these singular railroad needs.

Finally, these issues have an international dimension as well. Some railroads have cross border operations with Canadian railroads. Indeed, CSXT itself has operations in the Province of Ontario. For years, the Railroad Radio Service and its authorized Frequency Coordinator have maintained good relationships with the Canadian Government and the Canadian railroads, resulting in a seamless operation across this national border. Importantly, many of the frequencies authorized in the Railroad Radio Service are shared by the Canadian Rail operations and cross border coordination of these frequencies is required for all operations within seventy five (75) miles of the border. These continuing coordination needs are clearly best met by the current dedicated spectrum.

### **III CONCLUSION**

For the reasons set out above, and those detailed by the AAR, CSXT urges the Commission to retain the Railroad Radio Service with its authorized frequency coordinator, the AAR. Failure to recognize the unique character of the railroad industry by consolidating its service with that of other groups will imperil the future of safe and efficient rail transportation for the entire nation.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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